

Remarks

The Applicant provisionally elects Group I, claims 1-11 for examination in this application.

While the Applicant does not disagree with the Examiner's finding that Groups I and II may be patentably distinct, the Applicant notes that 35 U.S.C. § 121 authorizes, but does not require, the USPTO to restrict an application to one invention if two or more independent and distinct inventions are claimed in one application. In view of the expense that would be imposed upon the Applicant by multiple patent applications and multiple patents, it is believed that restriction requirements should be issued only when absolutely necessary. Therefore, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the restriction requirement.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required or credit overpayment to deposit account no. 12-0415. In particular, if this response is not timely filed, then the Commissioner is authorized to treat this response as including a petition to extend the time period pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136 (a) requesting an extension of time of the number of months necessary to make this response timely filed and the petition fee due in connection therewith may be charged to deposit account no. 12-0415.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Post Office with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents

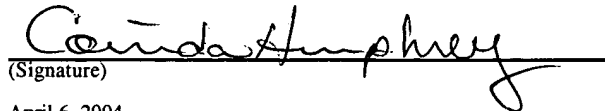
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Corinda Humphrey

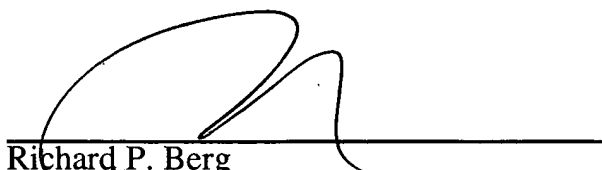
(Name of Person Signing)

  
(Signature)

April 6, 2004

(Date)

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